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**Politico: New Hoosick Falls blood test results show PFOA levels at 30 times the national average**

By Scott Waldman

08/04/16 03:02 PM EDT

ALBANY — Hoosick Falls residents who drank from the tainted municipal water supply have, on average, more than 30 times the national level of a toxic chemical in their blood, according to state health department data obtained by POLITICO.

The median level of PFOA in the blood of about 1,000 residents who were tested was 64.2 parts per billion, according to the health department data. The national average is 2 parts per billion.

The test results were mailed to residents this week, but have not been otherwise publicly released. It is the first comprehensive look at the PFOA blood levels among those people who live or had lived in the Rensselaer County village and drank tainted water over an unknown period.

Two months ago, the state said the median PFOA level among all people sampled in the area was 28 parts per billion and that hundreds of residents have elevated levels.

The lower number was based on sampling of about 2,000 people, including many residents on private wells outside of the village that were not polluted as well as residents who moved away years ago. Residents and health experts have been critical of the state for withholding results that include only village residents since those numbers were likely to be higher.

The blood levels for older residents in the village showed the highest levels of PFOA, according to the health department data. For men and women 60 and older, the median level was 91 parts per billion, the documents show. By comparison, the median for children under 18 was 33.8 parts per billion. Some residents have reported blood levels of 100 times, or even 500 times the national average.

In Hoosick Falls, the public water supply tested at about 600 parts per trillion of PFOA. That's more than six times the federal safety recommendation for human consumption of 70 parts per trillion.

PFOA, or perfluorooctanoic acid, has been widely used in non-stick products for decades, including food packaging, carpeting and furniture. The chemical is present in the bloodstream of virtually the entire population, though typically at much lower levels than those in Hoosick Falls. PFOA has been linked to serious health problems, including cancer, thyroid issues and high cholesterol.

The state health department has a public meeting scheduled for Thursday night in Hoosick Falls to review the results.

News 10

### **State provides blood testing update in Hoosick Falls**

By Mary Wilson

Published: August 4, 2016

HOOSICK FALLS, N.Y. (NEWS10) – New York State officials gave the people of Hoosick Falls a status update on the water crisis in the village.

The meeting was hosted by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and the Department of Health.

The DOH has held 22 blood testing events. Many have taken place at the Hoosick Falls Armory. With nearly 3,000 blood test results back, a clearer picture of the exposure is now known.

People who use Hoosick Falls village water have 30 times the amount of PFOA in their blood than the average American. With knowledge of their contamination, many are asking, 'What now?'

There doesn't seem to be an answer coming from the DOH other than to wait. PFOA levels decrease in the blood system by half in two to four years.

Michael Hickey, who's credited with exposing the crisis after his father died from cancer, said it's time to look past the frustration and toward the Superfund investigation.

"You're not going to be able to say, you know, my blood's 80; I'm going to get cancer tomorrow," he said. "That's the ever evolving science that's always changing, and I think the ultimate goal would be to concentrate on the polluter and to have a safer water supply going forward."

"We know that these blood monitoring results they provide information about past exposure," Dr. Nathan Graber said. "Most important things to do in response to the exposure that's been done."

Dr. Graber said the next step after receiving blood test results is to contact a physician. Many of the possible side effects of PFOA exposure can be treated.

Anyone with questions about their blood test results, or who still needs to be tested, there are experts on hand at the Armory three days a week, including this Saturday.

TWC News

## **Hoosick Falls Residents Hear from State Officials on PFOA**

By Tanja Rekhi

August 4, 2016

A somewhat empty venue was filled with questioning residents at the Hoosick Falls Armory Thursday night.

For the first time in months, people dealing with PFOA water contamination got to ask state health officials what all the numbers mean -- numbers they've been gathering for the past seven months about how much of the man-made contaminant is in residents' drinking water and blood, and what that means for their health.

Some studies show the chemical found at nearby Saint-Gobain has been linked to cancer, thyroid disease and issues with pregnancy.

"The body of evidence is growing," said Dr. Nathan Graber, the director of the Center for Environmental Health. "We learn more all the time, and we continue to follow the science as it grows."

Residents say Thursday night wasn't the night to get answers. Attendee Tony Goncalves walked out after hours of listening, saying all he wanted was an apology.

"I think the DOH is so busy worrying about measuring and taking data that they haven't figured out that their real job here is to care for the people of the community," he said.

Although some residents say they left feeling just as empty as the chairs beside them, they say all they can do is continue to ask.

"Most of the people who were exposed or have been tested know where they stand right now," Goncalves said. "But what does that mean for tomorrow, and what happens to the family member that passed away two years ago? Three years ago? Five years ago?"

## **Law firm holds meeting on potential water lawsuit**

[theintell.com](http://theintell.com)

Posted: Thursday, August 4, 2016 10:24 pm

By Kyle Bagenstose, staff writer

A fourth team of lawyers has announced it is lining up to potentially file suit over water contamination in Warminster, Warrington and Horsham.

Representatives of Anapol Weiss, a personal injury law firm based out of Philadelphia, and The Pepper Law Firm, based in Jamison, delivered a joint presentation to about 100 residents in Horsham on Thursday night. The firms laid out what potential legal action would like look, stating that there is the potential for both individual and class action lawsuits against the federal government and private chemical companies.

"It's a long road," Anapol Weiss attorney Lawrence Cohan told the audience. "It's not going to be easy."

The potential suits would address local drinking water contaminated with unregulated chemicals perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS). The contamination has shut down about 16 public and 150 private drinking water wells in the three affected communities, and also reached some water wells of neighboring communities in lower amounts.

The chemicals are suspected to have originated in firefighting foams used at a trio of current and former military bases in the area, and could have reached the taps of as many as 70,000 people in the area. Three other legal teams — led by New York City's Weitz & Luxenberg, Philadelphia's Williams Cuker Berezofsky, and Philadelphia's Saltz, Mongeluzzi, Barrett & Bendesky, have also held public meetings or stated they intend to take legal action.

Cohan laid out his team's case during Thursday's meeting, held at the Manor at Commonwealth Court, adjacent to the former Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base in Horsham. Cohan said possible awards sought would include compensation for the contamination of water, diminished property values and personal injuries.

Cohan said he believed it was unlikely that the bulk of legal action would take the form of a class action lawsuit. He told the audience he believed that such a suit would only take place in order to force a potential defendant to provide medical monitoring: blood tests that would show how much of the chemicals accumulated in those potentially exposed.

"That gets filed with one lead plaintiff, and everybody in the community would automatically be a part of it," Cohan explained, adding it was possible, but less likely, that a class action suit could also be filed for diminished property values.

Instead, Cohan said he envisioned the bulk of legal action being made up of individual personal injury suits or a "mass tort" legal action.

"(Mass tort) is where many people have the same complaint, the same type of injuries, but everybody's injury is a little different," Cohan explained.

Echoing the opinions of other law firms that have held public meetings, Cohan also said that because immunity is commonly granted to the federal government, it can be difficult to

sue the military. However, he said that under the Federal Tort Claims Act, it is possible.

"You have to prove very specific things," Cohan said, before naming them. "The military knew or should have known the dangers of (the chemicals), they failed to adequately clean up, and they failed to adequately warn the community."

Cohan added that the manufacturers of the foams could also potentially be sued, and that a legal team would need to prove that the manufacturers actually provided the chemicals, knew they were dangerous, failed to warn others, and that the chemicals made people sick.

Cohan said a key to any legal challenge is a health study that would compare blood levels of the chemicals to illnesses in those exposed, in order to find a link. He said he was hoping the government would provide some level of analysis, but that his firm was considering conducting its own analysis if that does not take place.

He also explained to the audience that there is a statute of limitations on taking legal action: two years from when an individual first learned of a possible connection to a personal injury or that of a loved one. Cohan added that the distinction could be up to a judge. His firm would argue it would be from the first time an individual attended a legal meeting, but defendants often argue it to be when the information was first made public via the media or direct mailings.

"The government has been sending letters to your homes... those notices may arguably be the trigger point," Cohan said.

He added that, "unfortunately," the statute of limitations on the already deceased is stricter: two years from the time of death, regardless of when information about potential causes is made available.

"With very few exceptions, (the answer) is no," Cohan said.

Retainers passed out by the firms Thursday stated that the legal team would be entitled to one-third of any awards, after legal fees. Plaintiffs would only be required to compensate the legal teams if they win an award, the forms said. These stipulations are the same as the retainers passed out at meetings held by Weitz & Luxenberg and Saltz, Mongeluzzi, Barrett & Bendesky.

"We like to think we're better, but they're good law firms," Cohan said, before recommending residents choose a lawyer "that's going to look at your individual problems."

Cohan added that he has 36 years of experience in toxic tort litigation, is representing "thousands" of former U.S. Steel Fairless Works employees who believe they developed lung disease from working there, and has litigated against chemical companies such as Rohm and Haas and DuPont.

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